

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 01776 271043Z

15

ACTION AGR-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 EB-11 COME-00

TRSE-00 OMB-01 NSC-10 RSR-01 /100 W

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R 271012Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4822

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

USMISSION BERLIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, CZ

SUBJ: CZECHOSLOVAK GRAIN PROSPECTS

REF: STATE 140600

1. DESPITE UNUSUALLY COLD WEATHER AND HIGHER THAN NORMAL PRECIPITATION IN RECENT DAYS, OUTLOOK FOR 1973 HARVEST REMAINS FAVORABLE. TOTAL GRAIN HARVEST SHOULD EQUAL OR SLIGHTLY EXCEED 1972 LEVELS.

LAND UNDER CEREAL GRAINS THIS YEAR HAS BEEN INCREASED BY 15,000 HECTARES (10,000 HECTARES IN CZECH LANDS AND 5,000 HECTARES IN SLOVAKIA) IN COMPARISON WITH 1972.

2. AS IN PAST YEARS, CZECHOSLOVAKIA FACED WITH PROBLEMS OF LIMITED NUMBER OF COMBINES (WHOLE COUNTRY HAS ONLY 19,300 COMBINES, OF WHICH ALMOST HALF ARE MORE THAN FIVE YEARS OLD) AND INSUFFICIENCY OF COVERED STORAGE SPACE. THUS, CONTINUED PRECIPITATION - LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 01776 271043Z

PARTICULARLY IF IT TAKES THE FORM OF HEAVY STORMS - COULD NOT

ONLY CAUSE LODGING OF UNHARVESTED GRAIN, BUT ALSO ADVERSELY AFFECT HARVESTED GRAIN IN OPEN STORAGE.

3. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE THAT QUALITY OF 1973 WHEAT CROP, EXPRESSED IN TERMS OF PROTEIN CONTENT, IS HIGHER THAN LAST YEAR.

4. ALTHOUGH HARVEST IS ALLEGEDLY IN FULL SWING THROUGHOUT COUNTRY, EMBOFFS HAVE OBSERVED LARGE UNHARVESTED AREAS IN BOHEMIA, NORTHERN MORAVIA, AND NORTHERN SLOVAKIA AS RECENTLY AS JULY 22.

5. SUGGEST CAUTION BE USED IN EVALUATING CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS REPORTS OF HARVEST PROGRESS: AT THIS STATE OF HARVEST, SUCH REPORTS USUALLY REFER TO OFFICIAL STATE PURCHASES, WHICH REPRESENT ONLY 25-35 PERCENT OF TOTAL HARVEST.

6. GIVEN INTEREST IN EAST EUROPEAN AND SOVIET GRAIN SITUATION, USDA MAY WISH TO LEVY SPECIAL REQUIRMENT ON FBIS FOR WEEKLY SUMMARY OF HARVEST-RELATED INFORMATION. IF SUCH SUMMARY IS PRODUCED, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING COPY.
SHERER

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